

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Confirmation No.: 1012

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AMENDMENT, Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA, 22313-1450, on

January 12, 2005

Gerald T. Schubert

Gerald T. Shekleton Reg. No. 27,466

Gerald T. Shekleton Reg. No. 27,466

Mail Stop AMENDMENT
Commissioner for Patents
P. O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.97, a list of documents is disclosed on the attached Form PTO-1449 that may be material to the examination of this application. The cited references are enclosed herewith.

Documents for which the supplied date of publication lists the year of publication without the month were published sufficiently earlier than the effective U.S. filing date and any foreign priority date, so that the particular month of publication is not in issue. Pursuant to §609 of the MPEP, it is understood that the month of publication is not required when the particular month of publication is not in issue.

No inferences should be drawn that the attached list represents a comprehensive investigation, or that any material disclosed is equivalent to the subject invention. In addition, none of the documents that have publication dates prior to the priority date of the above application anticipate the invention in this application.

Applicant also encloses a copy of the PCT International Preliminary Examination Report.

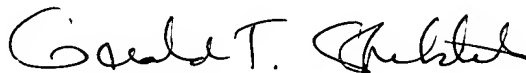
Serial No.: 10/616,010

The cited document(s) disclose numerous specific features. There has been no attempt to list each and every feature disclosed by each document. The Examiner is requested to review the document(s) and determine the extent of the materiality of the document disclosures with respect to the present invention.

The discussion of any art and the citation of any document(s) herein is not to be construed as an admission that the art or document disclosure is necessarily within the invention field of endeavor, that the art or document disclosure is necessarily prior in time to a particular date which may be relevant to the instant patent application, and/or that the art or document disclosure is otherwise necessarily prior art as defined by the patent law with respect to the instant invention and application.

Also, there is reserved the right to later set forth how the instant invention is distinguished over the disclosure of any document or other art, including the disclosures of the art and document(s) recited herein, that may be cited by the Examiner in rejecting a claim in the instant patent application. The recitation herein of the art and document(s) is not to be construed as an assertion that more pertinent art could not possibly be in existence.

Respectfully submitted,



Gerald T. Shekleton
Registration No. 27,466

Dated: January 12, 2005

WELSH & KATZ, LTD.
120 South Riverside Plaza
22nd Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Telephone: 312-655-1500

